

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, PUBLIC SAFETY, AND URBAN AFFAIRS SENATE BILL 264 NOVEMBER 1, 2011

Thank you Chairman Wanggaard and members of the Senate Committee on Labor, Public Safety and Urban Affairs for allowing me this opportunity to offer my testimony on Senate Bill 319 and its companion Assembly Bill 319. Senate Bill 264 will allow municipalities to reopen their contracts to modify compensation and fringe benefits.

While serving as the Co-Chair of the Joint Finance Committee and working on the 2011-12 state budget, I was asked by the leadership of the Milwaukee Public Schools if I would be willing to author an amendment to allow them to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Milwaukee Teachers Education Association. The idea was to allow them to work on certain portions of their contract without voiding the whole contract. MPS hoped MTEA would make some cost saving concessions to avoid multiple layoffs. Ultimately, MTEA chose to ignore this proposal, which would have saved 198 jobs and SAGE program according to MPS. While MTEA did not pursue the opportunity, at least the option was there.

When Representative Wynn came forward with this proposal, I asked to be the Senate lead on the bill due to my experience with getting the MOU amendment added to the budget. I'm sure there are many local governments that would like this opportunity to work with local unions who would be willing to make concessions to help the municipality's budget.

The companion bill, AB 319 passed through the Assembly Committee on State Affairs on an 8-0 vote last week. And it is also supported by the Wisconsin League of Municipalities. Senate Bill 264 will provide municipalities and unions more flexibility and more options in working with their local budgets. Senate Bill 264 can help save taxpayers money and could help to save jobs as well. I hope you will join us in supporting this bill.



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To: Senate Committee on Labor, Public Safety, and Urban Affairs

From: Curt Witynski, Assistant Director, League of Wisconsin Municipalities

Date: November 1, 2011

Re: SB 264

The League of Wisconsin Municipalities, on behalf of its 592 city and village members, supports SB 264, allowing municipalities and unions to agree on compensation and fringe benefit reductions without the agreement being viewed as modifying an existing collective bargaining agreement for purposes of Act 10. This bill gives municipalities the flexibility to negotiate with their unions on salary and benefit cost reductions without the memorandum of understanding qualifying as a modification of the current collective bargaining agreement. This one-time tool may prove beneficial to numerous municipalities whose unions have been interested in discussing making pension contributions but unwilling to risk losing all aspects of the current collective bargaining agreement.

We urge you to vote in support of this bill. Thanks for considering our comments.